

Tiffany Star #27

The Official Publication of the
History of the Imperium Working Group

WHAT IN THE STARS

by Mike Mikesh

News from Origins '91

Beginning with HARD TIMES, GDW is planning to do a MegaTraveller product each quarter for the next two years or so. Most of those will be done in-house or by Chuck Gannon, the MT Consultant to Challenge. Products will primarily relate to Diaspora Sector or the background for STAR VIKING rather than the Rebellion era. Also at this Origins, Chuck Gannon signed a contract for DIASPORA SOURCEBOOK, the follow-on to HARD TIMES.

Chuck is probably responsible to a large degree for this new commitment to MegaTraveller by GDW. Although he is a prolific writer, that is not so much the reason as what he writes promotes STAR VIKING, if indirectly. Decision makers in the company are eager to do this product, and are happy to allot additional slots to MegaTraveller to that end.

STAR VIKING was originally a new concept in miniatures rules. The project has apparently grown into a system as comprehensive as STRIKER. From Marc Miller's comments during a seminar, it

sounds like much of the background was inspired by the novel, SPACE VIKING, by H. Beam Piper. Some of the ideas for the Sword Worlds also came from the same place.

Space:1889 and 2300AD are dead and gone without consideration that they would be revived. GDW made a decision to go with RP games based on the Twilight:2000 system with but one exception: MegaTraveller.

As personal speculation, I would not rule out that MT might also be converted to Twilight:2000 in the years ahead. We've already seen quite a number of systems associated with the game: Mercenary, Azhanti High Lightning, Snap Shot, Striker and so on. Traveller, anymore, is the gaming universe, not the rules. You can even use GURPS and still be playing Traveller. So, I'm inclined to think that a conversion would have a comparatively small impact.

MegaTraveller Journal 2 was out for Origins. SOLOMANI & ASLAN is slated for release in September. In fact, Mike Vilardi was finishing some of the interior illustrations as he sat behind the DGP booth. (Sharp looking stuff!)

Marc announced there is serious talk of doing GEnie on-line Traveller adventures, perhaps soon. He is very pleased at the activity he's seen on that net, and is rather excited about prospects.

THUNDER FROM ABOVE

by Rob Caswell

GEnie: 6/21/91

This fall, DGP will be publishing a collection, THE BEST OF THE TRAVELLERS' DIGEST. It will include (among other things) "The Complete Rebel Reporter"—a compilation of all our Rebel Reporter columns. However, that feature did not conclude during the Digest's run. Therefore, we have some holes to fill.

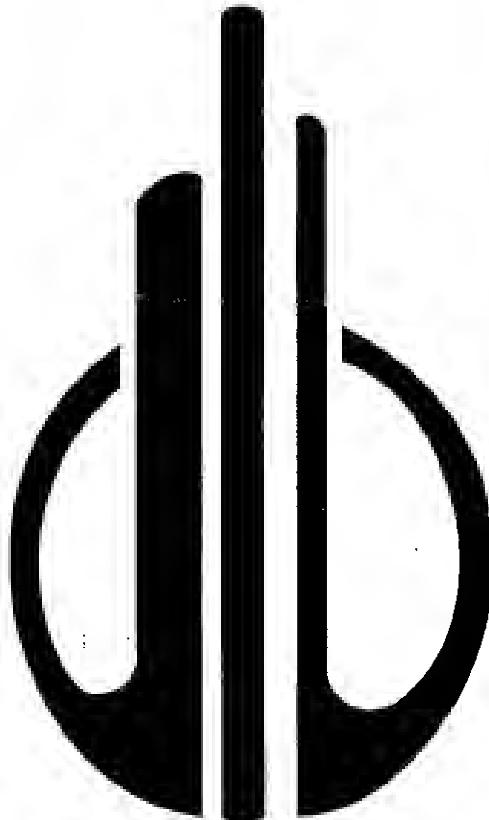
We are looking for writers to handle doing Rebel Reporter entries for Margaret and Daibei. The entries should be 2-3,000 words in length and should tell of the faction by one of its supporters. The "writer" can be anyone from, say, the Minister of Public Relations to a journalist. Your choice—be creative. The deadline for the pieces is 15 August 1991.

The approach of the article can vary. Some previous installments have been interviews, others just textual overviews. You're free choose either format or try something else. Just let me know what you intend.

If anyone is interested in taking either of these assignments on, please drop me a line (at R.CASWELL). You don't need to be previously published, but if we haven't printed your work before, a writing sample is helpful in giving us a feel for your writing abilities.

—Rob

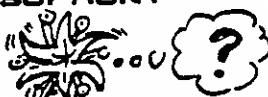
Late News: Dennis Myers is doing "Rebel Reporter: Margaret". Jim Ujcik and I had been trying to phone Robert Range, the Daibei sector analyst, to see if he was interested. But, we couldn't reach him, so Greg Videll will do it. (Robert, do send your input to Greg to see what might be appropriate for the article.) - mm





HIWG CHAIRSOPHONT LETTER

by Ed Edwards

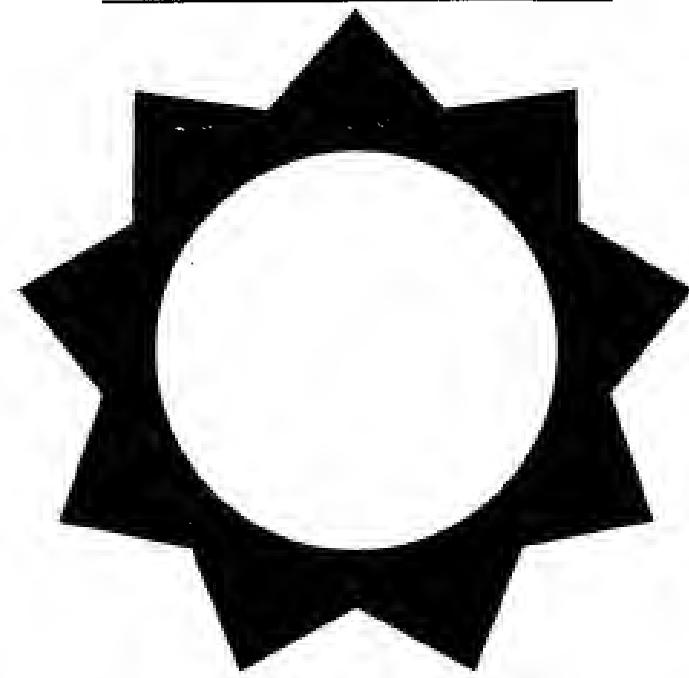


NEW HIWG DOCUMENTS

Order Number: 166.07 The Solomani Involved in Geneering? by 3 Pages David Schneider. This is an essay about probable Solomani attitudes regarding geneering in humans. Order from Steven Schwartz.

Order from Clay Bush:

- HD 166.05 Counterinsurgency strategies, by D. Schneider
- HD 130.01 Reticulan Parasite: Alien & Aliens for MT!
- HD 092.01 Darmine culture working paper
- HD 052.07 Fleet strengths
- HD 052.06 Imperial Navy Commands
- HD 032.03 What are Psionics, exactly?
- HD 032.02 Fusion Reactor Systems
- HD 0001 How to HIWG '91



Dear Fellow TRAVELLER:

GENie: 6/23/91

New Members

New to HIWG (let us hear a big cheer for John Duncan Law-Green of HIWG-UK for his recruiting prowess!):

- 181 Stuart Machin, Kent, UK
- 182 Leighton Piper, Lancashire, UK
- 183 David Woodall, Morgantown, WV
- 184 Charles Gannon, Suffern, NY
- 185 Richard Artis, Hope, IN
- 187 Robert Bates, Lancashire, UK
- 188 Ian Sales, Nottinghamshire, UK
- 189 A. Stewart, Somerset, UK
- 190 Wayne Ligon, Montgomery, AL
- 191 William Dover, Butner, NC
- 192 B. Fuller, Buffalo, NY
- 193 Mark Henderson, Hants, UK
- 194 Micheal Cosgrave, Cork, IRELAND
- 195 James Cosgrave, Cork, IRELAND
- 196 James Cooke, Bedfordshire, UK
- 197 Alan Huscroft, Reading, UK
- 198 Allan Prewett, South Australia, Australia
- 199 Gregory Lee, North Attleboro, MA
- 200 James Kundert, Hayward, CA (J.KUNDERT)

Congrats to James Kundert—the 200th person to join HIWG!

HIWG—Helping the Imperium Wane Gracefully!

—Ed Edwards, HIWG Chairsophont

STAFF: Mike Mikesh, Ed Edwards and John Meyers.

TIFFANY STAR is a monthly amateur periodical published in support of the History of the Imperium Working Group (HIWG). The activities of HIWG are devoted to the development of the setting for Game Designers' Workshop's (GDW) science fiction role playing game of the far future, TRAVELLER. TRAVELLER is a registered trademark of GDW and is used with permission only. Portions of this periodical are derived from other TRAVELLER materials published by GDW or Digest Group Publications and are the copyright of the respective groups.

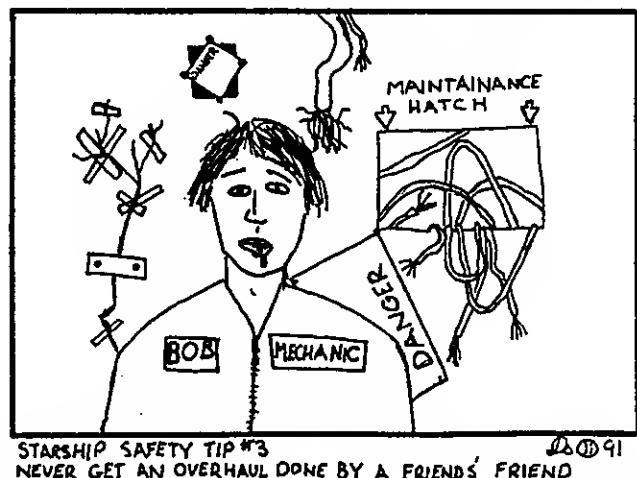
TIFFANY STAR is available to History of the Imperium Working Group members at the single issue price of \$2.00. Members automatically receive subscriptions upon the payment of dues. Annual dues for HIWG membership are \$12.00 and are payable to Ed Edwards, HIWG, 1410 E. Boyd, Norman OK 73071. Stamps accepted.

Illustrations and photo-ready articles are welcome. Send mail to Mike Mikesh, TIFFANY STAR, 3124 75th Ave. #3, Landover, MD 20785.

Q: What staggers around the room and has ten daggers in its back?

A: One of Lucan's admirals.

—David Schneider (Australia)



STARSHIP SAFETY TIP #3
NEVER GET AN OVERHAUL DONE BY A FRIEND'S FRIEND.

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WRITER'S NOTES

by Mike Mikesh

Professional Looking Manuscripts

A few of the other writers I have contact with (especially the novices) don't realize how great a role presentation has in getting a manuscript accepted. Originally, I didn't appreciate this point myself. Sure, the writing classes and books mentioned it. Gary Thomas (DGP) brought up the same thing in a seminar. I did what they recommended, but figured any editor really worth his salt would see past any roughness and recognize a worthy piece for what it was.

Not so. Better submissions were rejected while mine were accepted even when sent later. I know mine, however, were thoroughly prepared. I took hours to assure I conformed to the writer's guidelines and went beyond that to anticipate what the editor might like. I think that's what paid off.

Why is this? An editor is like anyone else. With a lot of work on the desk, he will reach for what looks appealing and well organized first, giving that ample attention. Other things will get what time remains, and will not stand out as well in his mind as selections are made. Worse, if time is really short, the least attractive manuscripts might hardly be touched until the time comes to send the rejections.

In the selection process itself, if a writer takes short-cuts or gets a little careless, an editor will give the document less consideration or judge the content a bit more harshly. On the other hand, a thoroughly prepared document with a clean and well organized appearance will more likely earn an editor's favor.

This isn't to say that an editor is unduly swayed by aesthetics. Rather I suspect he is looking for what will relieve his burden since an editor usually has much more work than he has time for. If he has something that won't take up a lot of his time for the results he'll get, all the better.

Appearance and good finishing also play a secondary role. In submitting to magazines that do not specialize in Traveller, the editor might not know enough about Traveller to judge. He may have trust to the professional appearance of the manuscript alone.

Game Designers' Workshop

Challenge is looking for smaller MegaTraveller articles than they've customarily been taking, on the order of 2000-3000 words.

While GDW's MT product schedule will be dominated by Chuck Gannon and in-house writers, they *might* accept proposals from others. If you send a proposal, keep it down to one page. Demonstrate your writing talents on that page by making it sound appealing. Tell them what it's about, what it will include, and maybe some points about why you think it will sell well or other strengths.

Send the proposals to Loren Wiseman. All outside proposals, regardless of the game system, go to Loren. That's his job in GDW. After it passes his initial review, then it goes to Marc or whoever.

MegaTraveller Journal

I had much less opportunity to talk to Rob Caswell than I would have liked. But DGP's commitment to MTJ sounds quite firm.

Opportunities to write official material about the Rebellion and the shattered Imperium at large are apparently closing down. This is disappointing since, after all, HIWG was originally founded on this. The move now is to create a density of support for particular areas by excluding others. One area is Diaspora. The other is Deneb. We cannot do much for Diaspora until we see HARD TIMES. But MTJ needs support material for Deneb NOW.

Need ideas? How about a piece on the University of Regina? From the Players' Manual p 42, we know that UoR is a broad spectrum institution whose greatest strengths are history, sociology, psychology, and political science. Its also involved in excavating

Ancient sites. Interesting?

How about Oberlindes? Before the closing of Corridor, it was in a struggle with Tukera to span both Regina and Aramis Subsectors. Marc suggested in seminar a couple of years ago that the Rebellion would bring profit to the smaller lines at the expense of the bigger. Where does that put Oberlindes now? How about other companies?

What are the main worlds of the Marches really like? We see references to Regina, Rhyland, and Mora. But what role do they really play? What do they contribute to the interstellar scene? We all hear regularly of Japanese technology, Paris fashions, the Gnomes of Zurich, even Chinese food and Cuban cigars. To make the setting more believable we need things like these. We also need to know more about the societies. What makes the people of one world different from the next?

What's in the news? Wealthy noble families that escaped across the Rift might be stirring up trouble. The Sword Worlds and Deneb could be locked in a cold war. Two worlds may be engaged in an economic feud. Who are the news makers: noblemen, criminals, heroes, scientists, admirals, holostars...?

Give the setting more color. And in so doing, lean toward instilling more adventuring potential.

Other Magazines

Last issue, I mentioned several magazines that would likely take Traveller submissions. I've included their addresses here. Far & Away is still going—I just received their issue #2. I understand Dragon only takes submissions from published authors, so let them know what you've already done in your cover letters. Ask when their next SF special issue will be (and let me know what you find out). I don't know for sure if Space Gamer is still publishing. But the latest address I have for them is below.

Dragon Magazine
P.O. Box 756
Sheridan Springs Road
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

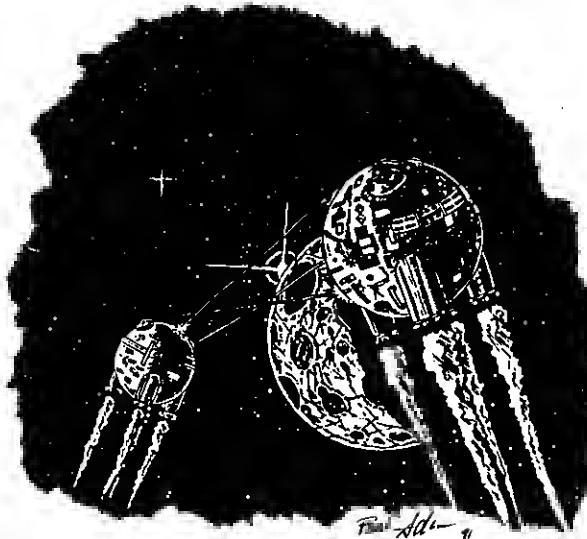
Far & Away Magazine
3907 Harrison Road
Cincinnati, OH 45211

Polyhedron
P.O. Box 515
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Space Gamer/Fantasy Gamer
P.O. Box 8399
Long Beach, CA 90808

StarLance Publications
James B. King—Voyages
editor
50 Basin Drive
Mesa, WA 99343

White Wolf Magazine
1298 Winter Place
Anniston, AL 36201



WHO'S DOING WHAT

Chuck Gannon

Being a professional writer with much of his resources directed to Traveller, Chuck will have a prominent role in GDW Traveller production for the foreseeable future. Under the circumstances, I feel it worthwhile to give the readership a clarification of his role in GDW and HIWG's relationship with him.

As Chuck has explained to me many times, he is not a decision maker at GDW. He is both modest and truthful when he says he is in no position of authority. None the less, he has earned GDW's attention by virtue of his level of productivity.

Chuck has plans for a series of adventure books, set in Diaspora Sector, of which HARD TIMES is only the first. These are a part of a Traveller "saga" spanning the period from the Rebellion to Star Viking (circa 1130) and beyond. I presented his basic timeline in TS26.

Welcoming our association, Chuck has already spent many hours on the phone, and also at Origins, in discussions with HIWGers. Outside of the simple enjoyment of having people to talk Traveller with, he has a serious desire to understand the perspectives of others deeply involved with the game.

Unfortunately, we probably cannot help him to the same degree as we did other products, such as MEGATRAVELLER ALIENS vols 1 & 2. Chuck has repeatedly demonstrated a great appreciation of HIWG and what it does. But, the manner in which he writes makes it structurally difficult to incorporate much input.

To my experience, most contributors usually find *direct* inspiration from the literature that has come before. REBELLION SOURCEBOOK, for instance, provided a wealth of facts and tidbits from which we've derived other ideas and built published adventures upon. HIWG articles usually spring from the existing facts.

Chuck, however, writes in a more self-inspired fashion. Relying on his long familiarity with Traveller, he creates ideas primarily from his own imagination. He then goes back to make sure he has not collided with the existing facts. This approach leaves him more comfortable working in areas and with subjects that are not already developed. So, outside input would usually prove more inhibiting than inspiring.

This puts Chuck and other writers in separate, *but* complementary, roles. Chuck is building completely new material, but is leaving a lot of blanks in the process. Other writers, particularly those already in HIWG, seem to delight in filling in blanks. Obscure facts or apparent inconsistencies can provide the makings of complete articles. And when HARD TIMES sees print, I'm sure we'll find even more material from which to weave still more essays, articles, and adventures.

Equipment Guide

In the months ahead, Chuck Gannon plans to write an equipment book in support of the environment for HARD TIMES. This project won't have his attention for a while, yet. I bring it up, though, because he might accept vehicles, ships, and equipment submitted from outside. We have some exceptionally good designers in the membership, Scott Olson, Clay Bush, Phil Athans, and Rob Prior, just to name a few. So, I wanted to give folks a heads-up to get them thinking.

A key point about this equipment guide is that it largely avoids items that are on "the cutting edge" of the technology. Since much of HARD TIMES deals with a slip in technology, this naturally means it probably won't include equipment in the high stellar range. But more to the point, Chuck wants to feature durable items likely to still function despite a depressed economy and decline in technology.

For instance on TL10 worlds, disregard their grav vehicles, rather design their ground vehicles. When these "hard times" hit, grav vehicles might become scarce, but many ground vehicles could still be rigged to work indefinitely.

Perhaps contemporary examples might serve even better as illustration. Consider the Volkswagen Bug. New sales ended in the mid-seventies, but you still see them. They're tough little cars and parts are plentiful to those who frequent junk yards.

Another is the DC-3, a twin engine transport introduced sometime around World War II. Generations of aircraft have come and gone, but some "Gooney Birds" are still in active service today. Such a plane would surely have been easier to maintain back then than some of the fancier aircraft of the time.

If you do offer something to Chuck, include not only the basic statistics, but your worksheet as well so he can check how you arrived at the costs, volumes, weights, and so on.

While vehicles and equipment for this guide might at times lack glamour, a well thought out remarks section can make a big difference. If you write one, you could bring up something like it had a reputation for reliability, or was exceptionally plentiful, had interchangeable parts, very simple in design, used generic components, somewhat modular, or whatever. But give a little background color to the remarks. For example, revolutionaries on Tsunami refitted scores of fast water taxis into highly effective attack boats. A common model on other worlds, Instellarms similarly converted thousands at a reasonable cost. 101 VEHICLES might serve as a good guide for length.

Something else to consider is that Traveller worlds are seldom Earth-like. Give thoughts to worlds with dense atmospheres, arctic environments, or vacuum, and see what items might see greater use in "hard times." Even if most equipment cannot be high tech, imagination and novelty can make up for much.

As an aside, animal mounts might be appropriate, like the kian, miniphant, and horse. The poni, a beast of burden depicted on Scout Service emblems, was never written up. Such animals may be in high demand on some worlds suffering economic collapse. By virtue of being alien, or at least novel, they can offer something of a science fiction feel even while being low tech. (I have not brought this idea up to Chuck, yet.)

Even if these items are not technological wonders, they do present a challenge for designers. I'll include further information on this project as I get it.

C.N. (Nick) Walker (U.K.)

At the moment I am writing 2 short adventures, the first called "Hearts and Flowers" involving a group of players in command of an occupying force in a small city. The second is called "Enter the Cyborg" which is for players who have not played before and will introduce them to MT in a gentle fashion. I am also doing a piece on Vacc suits which is hopefully going to be the definitive statement on these much abused items that every player uses. Any input from anybody would be welcome.

Nick—"Enter the Cyborg" sounds like a good one for Challenge #57, the Introductory Scenarios Issue. Deadline for that is Sept 1, release date Jan 1992.—mm

SPACE CAUSE

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READER COMMENTARY

Will Traveller Survive?

Bob Grob (Kansas)

I can only reply "I hope so!". Of course that depends on whether WE survive to the year 2000 but that is another topic.

Seriously, "What are Traveller's strengths?" In my opinion, Traveller is strong in it's ease of character and world generation, the framework of it's future history, and it's breadth of scope. Probably it's greatest future strength is the willingness of GDW to allow computer aids in playing Traveller, including computer databases and generation programs. This is essential when dealing with a game that has such fantastic breadth as the Imperium does.

What are Traveller's weaknesses? As far as I am concerned, the greatest weakness is the tendency of GDW to try to re-sell me the same material time after time after time.

Running a close second is the loss of the JTAS and it's Traveller dedicated articles. (In my opinion Challenge is largely trash). I started playing and game mastering Traveller in 1979, but when Challenge started, after several issues, I gave up Traveller for several years, only recently returning after discovering Traveller's Digest material.

A third great weakness is the passing of the creative buck to the game master for nearly everything! Most of us simply do not have the time to spend in fully detailing each world we visit, yet when we buy adventures, most often everything is left up to the game master. What is desperately needed, instead of this attitude, are solid helps for the game referee. A major effort at a sector wide comprehensive library listing INCLUDING numerous native animals, plants, drugs, laws, system data, organization, and companies for a sector would, even though bulky, be much more of a help for the over-worked referee (and would sell much better) than the current "pass the buck" materials.

What are the decision makers doing right? Allowing, even encouraging computer use. Other than that? Uhh...nothing comes to mind...

What are the decision makers doing wrong? How many hours do you have to listen? Abandonment of JTAS, "pass the buck attitude," lack of world development, abandonment of High Guard, over-emphasis of flash (color pictures, etc.) rather than real materials usable in gaming, trying to sell us the same materials over and over again, the list goes on and on...

What does Traveller need so it may continue into the next century? Major library and world data development. All MAINWORLDS should be mapped and full data, for each, listed. Other worlds in system could be left for referee development as needed. This would not have to be for the entire area at once—just start a sector at a time—I would suggest Spinward Marches first. Secondly, development of many more minor races and cultures. Further work on robotics and cybernetics would also be helpful. TL15 would be far more involved with robotics than currently portrayed.

C.N. (Nick) Walker (U.K.)

Strengths: Traveller's main strength is its coherent background and forward movement through the future. Other strengths are its ability to cover almost every aspect of S.F. in one form or another, the task system, the size of the mapped universe and the background data available for every sector in that area, a group of loyal fans who support and make a lot of noise about Traveller and who try to push the game at every opportunity.

Weaknesses: Not a lot of published adventures for MegaTraveller, I mean 2 adventures total, go and look in your local games store, now how many adventures are there for AD&D or Call of Cthulhu? This game needs more adventures publishing for it. The background data, there is too much of it, spread over too many supplements, and unless you game from your home you cannot take it all with you, (I know, I have tried). Another problem is the amount of background data that the players need to know to get the most out of the published adventures; by this I mean the knowledge the characters would have by virtue of having lived through all of the events in the rebellion era.

John Strain (Florida)

Only if the players still want it will it exist. It behooves us to maintain their interest in it as we refs are the custodians of the games.

Will it still be published? Only if there is \$\$\$\$\$ still there. But WE, not THEY, must do it.

The Revision Rules have some good points and bad points as do all things in this world.

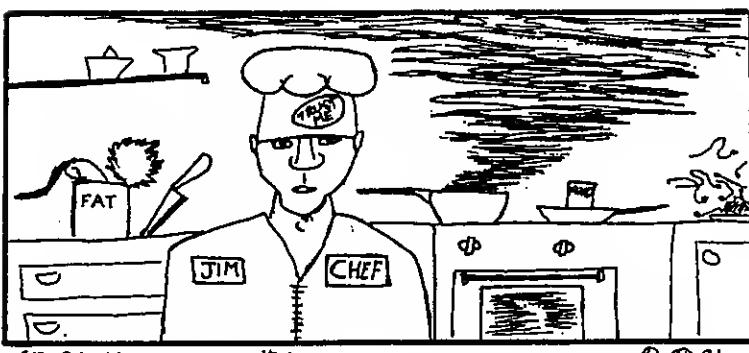
When the rules are vastly spread out, they cannot be searched for without massive delays. I cannot afford that. I simply have not the time to study a week for a three hour game!

Mike Mikesh

I'm surprised at the interest in this column, so will continue it indefinitely. I'll probably introduce a new topic next issue, but I'll continue to accept comments regarding Traveller in the year 2000.

Now for some remarks of my own.

Bob Grob brought up some points that are shared by many others. I hear them time and again. But allow me to bring up some counter-points.



STARSHIP SAFETY TIP #4
NEVER HIRE A CHEF AFTER A NIGHT IN THE STARPORT LOUNGE

READER COMMENTARY (continued from page 5)

First, GDW's tendency to re-sell old material. There's not much they could have done about that. Keep the classic little black books in print seems like an obvious answer—diehard fans loved those to no end. Unfortunately, the industry has changed. Even if players don't demand a lot of flash and gloss, the distributors do. Traveller needed the face-lift brought by MegaTraveller if it hoped to survive. That meant repackaging much of the old material and re-releasing it under the MT banner. There wasn't much choice.

The loss of JTAS was a matter of business. GDW was expanding and needed a vehicle to support all their RP's, not just Traveller. Sure, I would have liked to have seen them slam-dunk Twilight and return exclusively to Traveller. But why loose sleep over something that will never happen? Fortunately the loss of JTAS was balanced by the gain of Travellers' Digest and now MTJ.

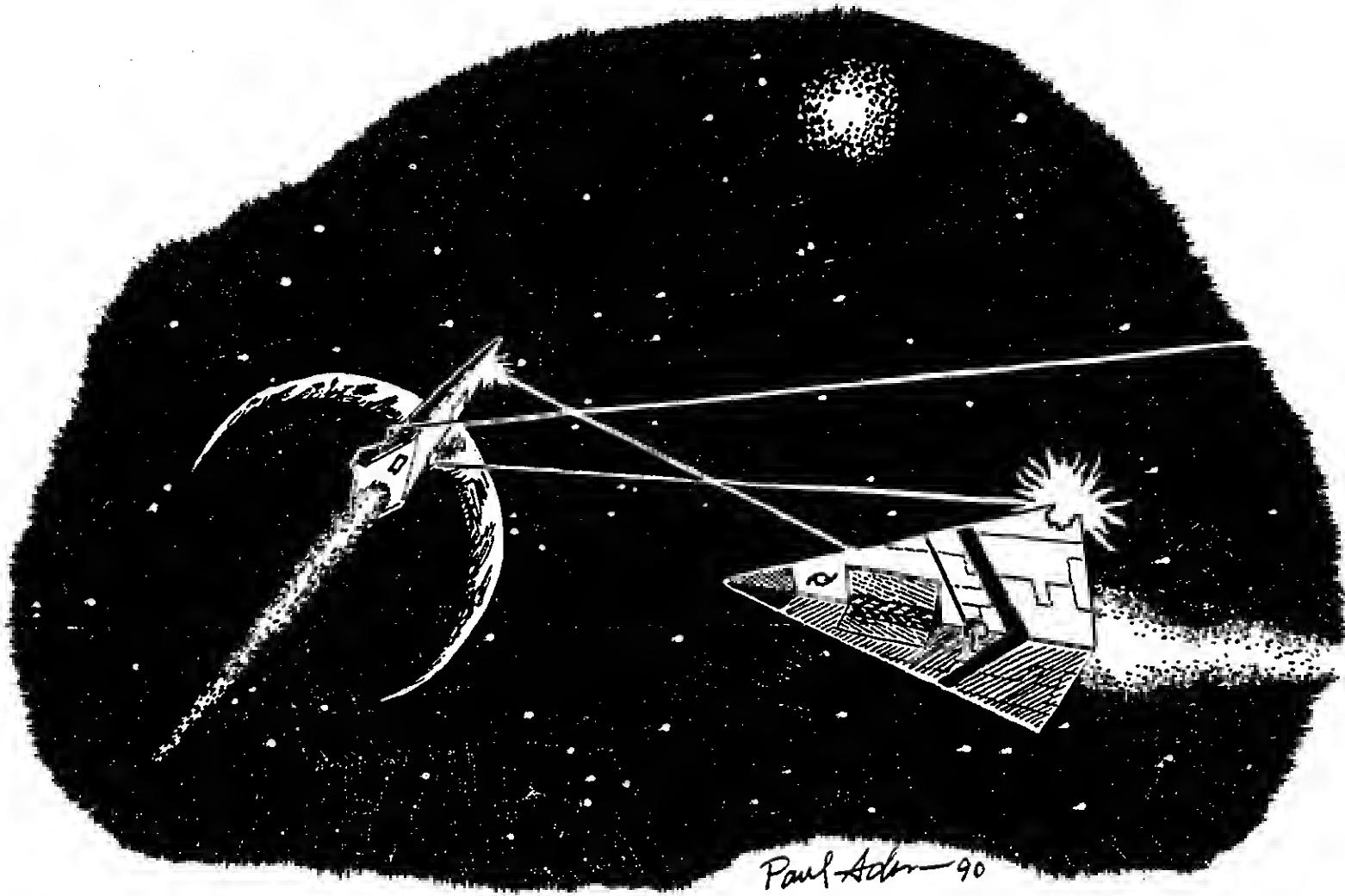
(Speaking of which, we should count our blessings and start supporting MTJ more actively. Rob Caswell is in need of dynamite articles, and isn't getting them. He just might become so frustrated

as to let MTJ share space—heaven forbid!—with A.I. We've got a good thing in MTJ, so lets keep it that way. Submit articles to MTJ.)

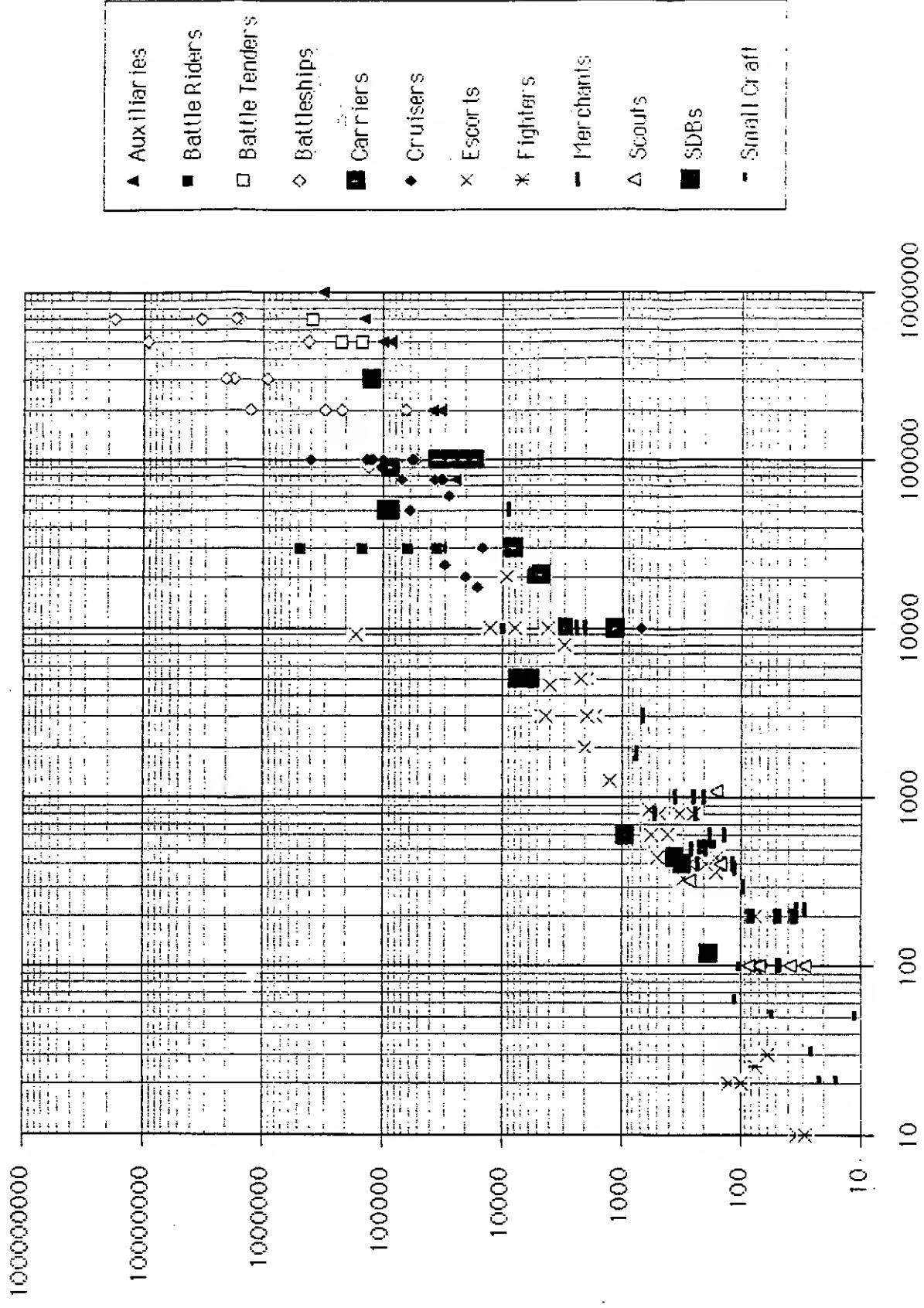
I have a lot to say about "passing the creative buck" to the game master, so will save it for another time. Bob and others express a legitimate grievance, but there are limits to what can be provided. Still, I think there are ways that writers can better serve the referees.

Unfortunately, this will surely exclude a "sector wide comprehensive library listing", let alone a sector by sector series. If you think back to Traveller's heyday, all we had were the Marches and a few outside things by licensees. The bulk of the Imperium was unknown territory. Sure, we were curious and interested in the rest. But the game didn't suffer for that lack.

Thanks to more recent publications, we got a little taste of everything. But this can't continue. GDW cannot adequately support all that area with the resources it has, nor does it have to. It hurts; but it must narrow its focus to Diaspora and Deneb if it hopes to maintain an adequate density of support for any setting. Its just a matter of economics.



Tonnage vs. Cost for all Mega Traveller Starships



© Rob Prior, 1991.

NAME THAT MEGA

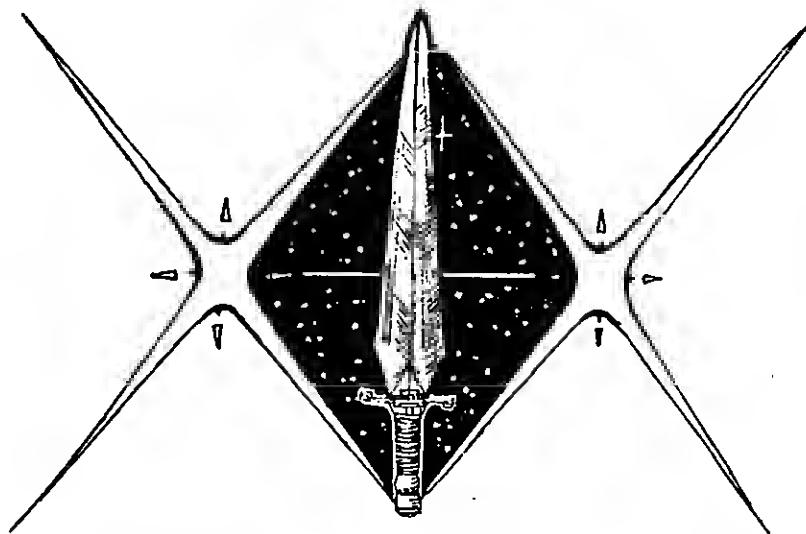
by John Meyers

Well, we've finally got a winning entry to announce. The winning piece is Instellarms by Duncan Law-Green. You will find it below on this. Duncan will receive a six month extension to his HIWG membership for his effort. Also in this issue is a computerized version of the Pandora Spaceways logo submitted by David Schneider. (See the accompanying text for more info on the company.) You can expect to see more of the entries over the next few issues.

Of note is the interesting fact that there were three separate submissions for Instellarms! This one was just a bit more polished

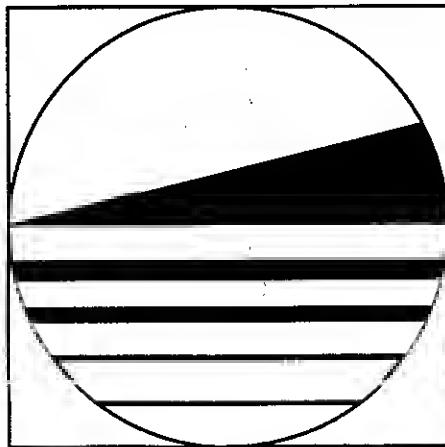
than the other two. However, the final word on whether this logo will become "official" has yet to be said. It may turn out that one of the other designs is more in line with some previous ideas at GDW (or some other excuse). Or of course, we could end up with no official logo. In any case, we will attempt to settle this issue for all of the entries as soon as possible. (Unfortunately, my time is scarce and convention season is not real easy on me either.) I'll pass along the information as soon as it becomes available.

Thanks to all who took the time to contribute. Also, please remember that we could always use more artwork. So don't think that you don't have to draw any more just because the contest is over!



LOGO OF THE MEGACORPORATION INSTELLARMS

DUNCAN LAW-GREEN.



PANDORA SPACEWAYS

by David Schneider

Pandora Spaceways was founded shortly before the fourth Frontier War by Harry Osterman. Originally a small shipping concern with only a hand full of vessels, Pandora Spaceways has now expanded into a large corporation with operations in several subsectors.

Through a subsidiary, Pandora Factors, the corporation has controlling interests in the following companies: Barrington Arms, Stardust Industries (a pharmaceutical company), and Gelford Trading (a brokerage firm).

Over 75% of the corporation stock is retained by the Osterman family.